

Research Proposal (500 Words): 300-word description of research agenda + 200-word Abstract

We are often asked to define or describe projects before we've completed or even begun them. This is true of business, academic, social and other settings, and applies to business plans, papers, grants, and other types of projects. And it's true here. Generally speaking, in proposals you're asked to describe the project you're planning to a relevant discourse community in a way that demonstrates that it's a useful, worthwhile project—one that will answer important questions and provide results. In this case your discourse community is a specific field of study – your major/minor or a related field. You're also often required to prove that you're the person best qualified to carry out the project, and (more often) to give some indication of how, exactly, you plan to proceed. Look for examples by reading article abstracts and grant applications.

Begin with a 300-word informal description of your research agenda.

Your main tasks are to:

- 1) Show the reader what types of questions your project will answer, and give a sense of where these questions came from, how you thought of them;
- 2) Convince the reader that the topic you are pursuing are important, and show us why the questions you're answering need to be answered;
- 3) Describe the type of research you're going to do: what types of sources will you use? Why? What will they help you (and us) to learn about the questions at issue?
- 4) Give a tentative answer, a thesis/enthymeme that sums up your argument in the paper;

Follow your informal description of your proposal with a 200 word formal abstract.

Abstracts may be speculative. You may be providing an educated guess about your main claim. Think of this as describing the paper that you want to write. But describe it in the present tense, as if it is already written. "In this paper I research _____ and analyze _____ in order to support my claim that _____."

Abstract Examples:

Benjamin Herman and Jean Lee (Mentor), History

This project involves discovering how the American Revolution was remembered during the nineteenth century. The goal is to show that the American Revolution was memorialized by the actions of the United States government during the 1800s. This has been done by examining events such as the Supreme Court cases of John Marshall and the Nullification Crisis. Upon examination of these events, it becomes clear that John Marshall and John Calhoun (creator of the Doctrine of Nullification) attempted to use the American Revolution to bolster their claims by citing speeches from Founding Fathers. Through showing that the American Revolution lives on in memory, this research highlights the importance of the revolution in shaping the actions of the United States government.

Jonathan Vu and Robert Blank (Mentor), Endocrinology

The purpose of this study is to identify relationships between the physical and genetic characteristics of bones in mice. The physical characteristics include size, density, and the force required to break the bone, while the genetic ones are the genes of the marker loci associated with the genes that affect these qualities. This study uses strains of mice with reduced genetic variation. The two strains of mice that are the most phenotypically extreme, meaning those with the strongest and weakest bones, are crossed. The F2 generation from that cross is then analyzed. The results of this analysis can be used to find which genotypes correlate with specific bone properties like size, density, and failure load. The anticipated outcome of this lab is the identification of the genotypes that affect bone strength in mice. The findings may be useful in treating medical conditions that are related to bone strength.

Annotated Bibliography

Purposes of this assignment are:

1. To compile a 6-8 item research resource in an area of interest to you.
 - a) At least 3 of these sources must come from the course textbook: *They Say/I Say*
 - b) At least one of your three outside sources must be a scholarly book
 - c) At least one of your three outside sources must be a scholarly journal article
 - d) Your remaining 1-3 sources can come from any other authoritative source
2. To learn to use the library resources and research tools.
3. To extract and concisely articulate arguments from theoretical and primary sources to secondary scholarly works in your field.
4. To articulate how your project relates to the sources you're consulting.

Your annotations should be written in formal, scholarly prose (not in fragments or in writing resembling casual speech) and clear language, and they should briefly describe the work, give its thesis (if applicable), and put it into the context of your project. Do this without quoting directly from the text. Your whole bibliography should be titled, and the title should state what your research project is. Your entries should be numbered. Your bibliography should be single-spaced throughout. Finally, your citations must conform to the MLA guidelines detailed in the *Little Seagull Handbook*. Additionally, this is one more opportunity for improving your writing; the challenges here are clarity, concision, selection, attention to detail, and organization.

More details and examples are available online at:

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/614/03/>

Each annotation should be approximately 100-150 words. Works that are crucial to your argument or central to your field deserve thorough commentary and thoughtful discussion of their relevance to your project. However, you will also examine works that turn out not to be helpful to your work. Simply describe and summarize these, and state why the work is not relevant to your project. If certain items demand longer annotations, don't hesitate to allot more space for them. Strive, however, for concision and clarity in every annotation. Although I expect you to be thoroughly familiar with all the works you eventually cite in your final paper, a thorough reading of everything you consult for your bibliography is probably neither possible nor necessary. I'll expect you to thoroughly and carefully read items you think will be the most important to your project, but other items you'll probably only want to scan for main argument and relevance. Use your best judgment.

A final note: you'll find that typing "annotated bibliography" into Google or another search engine will produce a large number of results. I haven't looked at most of these, so I can't verify their accuracy. If you plan on consulting one of these sites for aid in composing your annotated bibliography, do so with care and at your own risk.

Examples and further resources are available online at:

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/614/03/>

Major Essay 2 Outline Format

Section I - Introduction

- a. Hook and important contextual information
- b. Identify the Question at Issue this paper addresses
- c. Focused Thesis (Enthymeme): Claim because Reason
- d. Roadmap (a quick list of the main points addressed in the essay)

Section II - Body – Individual paragraphs should vary in length from about 6-8 sentences You may vary the organization of paragraphs according to your needs

A. Paragraph 1 – Either an important lead-in argument or your most important argument

1. **Argument #1:** This should be in the form of a topic sentence - an *assertion*
2. **Reasoning:** Two or three sentences explaining the logic/value of argument 1
3. **Evidence:** Provide specific evidence from a source or example. (Make sure you contextualize this evidence if needed). Cite your source!
4. **Analysis:** Explain what the evidence proves and how it supports your assertion

****Transition****

B. Paragraph 2 – An argument related to the first argument

1. **Argument #2:** This should be in the form of an *assertion*
2. **Reasoning:** Two or three sentences explaining the logic/value of argument 2
3. **Evidence:** Provide specific evidence from a source or example. (Make sure you contextualize this evidence if needed). Cite your source!
4. **Analysis:** Analyze the evidence with attention to how it proves your assertion

****Transition****

C. Paragraph 3 – Counter-argument (an alternative approach or a directly opposing argument)

1. **Argument/Counter-argument:** Summarize the opposing argument
2. **Evidence of the opposition**
3. **Evaluate this evidence**
3. **Reasons why the counter-argument is flawed**
4. **Evidence of your own proves why the counter-argument is flawed opponent**
5. **Analysis of your evidence to drive your point home**

****Transition****

D. Complete additional body paragraphs in above formats as needed

Section III - Conclusion

Circle back to your introduction, summarize your key points, and end with something memorable and show your reader how you have led them to this earned conclusion